

# The South and Germany

By

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WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA





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# The South and Germany

I hope that no one who reads this paper will suppose that I have any feeling in the matter. I am only correcting errors in Northern writers, and I trust that, after more than half a century since the war between the States, this may be done without exciting any sectional bias. On the other hand, I have no idea that the authors of the articles noticed below were themselves actuated by any ill feeling. It is just a habit merely that some Northern men have of mistaking the facts of history. So far from all Northern writers and speakers acting any ungenerous part, some of the noblest tributes to the South have come from the North. Notice the following astonishing tribute from the noted evangelist, Billy Sunday, delivered recently in his characteristic style before a Boston audience and reported in the newspapers. One need not take his laudation or censure too seriously to recognize the basis of a true difference between the North and the South in the war of 1861-1865.

This was the verbatim statement of Billy Sunday in the Tabernacle at Boston: "Sixty-eight per cent. of the men of the South are in the church. Why? You may not like it, but the truest, the purest, the finest men and women in America are south of the Mason and Dixon line. That's the reason it took 30,000,000 people to lick 8,000,000. There's more pure blooded Americans south of the Mason and Dixon line than anywhere else in this country. That's why so many of those men are Christians. I say that even if my old daddy was one of the boys in blue and fought against them. They were hard to lick down there, because they were real Americans. So south of the Mason and Dixon line they have got the North licked to a frazzle in religion and in morals."

The United States has declared war against Germany, and entered into a world contest, of which no one can tell the consequences. It is a just and righteous war waged by this government in vindication of long violated rights guaranteed by the International Law. And yet, at a moment when union and co-operation on all lines of action are highly expedient, there seems to be a concerted effort by Northern writers and speakers to cast slurs upon the old South by drawing analogies between it and Germany. This course has been taken without any regard for the feelings of the present generation of Southern men, who see no reason to be ashamed of the conduct of their ancestors.

Probably the most vicious of these attacks appeared in the *New York Times* for April 22nd. Under the title of "The Hohenzollerns and the Slave Power," the spirit of the old South to 1861 is said to have been essentially analogous to that of Germany. The slave power was "arbitrary, aggressive, oppressive." "The slave power proclaimed the war which was immediately begun to be a war of defence in the true Hohenzollern temper." "The South fought to maintain and extend slavery, and slavery was destroyed to the great and lasting gain of the people who fought for it, so that within a score of years from its downfall, the Southern people would not have restored it had it been possible to do so."

Here is the old trick of representing the weaker power the aggressive factor in history. An earlier instance of it occurs in the history of the *Times's* own State. The early New England writers in excusing their own aggressiveness represent the rich New England colonies with their thousands as in imminent danger of being wiped out and extinguished by the handful of Dutchmen at New York. And so it has been with the Southern question. In one breath the Northern historian has talked like the *Times* of the "arbitrary, aggressive and oppressive power" of the South, and in the next has exploited figures to show the declining power of the South from the Revolution down to 1861. With its "indefensible institution" the South's attitude was necessarily a purely defensive one, and Calhoun never at furthest asked any more than a balance of power to protect its social and economic fabric. The North began the attack in 1785 with a proposition to cede to Spain the free navigation of the Mississippi River. In 1820, it attacked again when Missouri applied for admission as a State with a constitution which permitted slavery. It attacked once more in 1828 and 1832, when, despite the earnest protest of the South, it fastened on the country the protective tariff system: and the attack was continued till both Congress and the presidency were controlled by them. When in pursuance of the decision of the Supreme Court the Southerners asked for the privilege of temporarily holding slaves in the Western territories until the population was numerous enough in each territory to decide the continuance of slavery for itself, it was denied them by the

North. Why can't the *Times* tell the honest truth that in this long contest between the growing North and the weakening South, it was the North that was "arbitrary, aggressive and oppressive," and that its design from the first was to exploit the South to its own advantage, and that the South only resisted this exploitation.<sup>1</sup> The permanent exclusion of slavery from all the national territory — a principle for which the North contended in 1860 — was clearly a more aggressive force than the so-called "extension of slavery," which meant nothing more than its temporary toleration during the formative period of a new State.

It is certain that if nature had been left to regulate the subject of slavery, not one of the Western territories would have had slavery — the odds, by reason of emigration and unfitness of soil and climate, being so greatly against it. In 1861, the North had obtained complete mastery of the political power in the country, and the South feeling no satisfaction in a union where the majority was so utterly hostile to it seceded.

Did the slave power "proclaim the war" as the *Times* asserts? Here it is again the old story of the weak man assaulting the strong, the lamb attacking the wolf. Every sensible man knows that the South would have been very glad to have had independence without war. But Lincoln would not even receive the Confederate commissioners for a parley on the subject. He made the ostensible ground of the war an attack on Fort Sumter, when, after vacillating for almost a month, he forced the attack, contrary to the advice of his own cabinet, by sending an armed squadron to reinforce the fort. Not a man was killed, and yet Lincoln without calling Congress, which had the sole power under

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<sup>1</sup> In 1789 William Grayson, one of the first two senators from Virginia, wrote to Patrick Henry: "The bill, (to establish the seat of government), has been ultimately defeated in the Senate, but gentlemen now begin to feel the observation of the Antis (*i. e.*, the anti Federalists in the Convention of 1787), when they informed them of the different interests of the Union, and the probable consequences that would result therefrom to the Southern States who would be the milch cow out of whom the substance would be extracted." (*Letters and Times of the Tylers*, I, p. 170.)



the constitution, suspended the writ of habeas corpus, instituted a blockade, and set to work to raise and organize an army to subdue the South. President Wilson waited for two years till two hundred American citizens had been killed by the Germans, and even then took no hostile step without the action of Congress. Who had the "Hohenzollern temper" — the North or the South in 1861?

Did the "South fight to maintain and extend slavery?" The South fought for independence and the control of its own actions, but it did not fight to extend slavery. So far from doing this, by secession the South restricted slavery by handing over to the North the Western territory, and its constitution provided against the importation of slaves from abroad.

Slavery was indeed destroyed by the war, and it is perfectly true that no one in the South would care to restore it. At the same time we see no reason why we should be grateful for the way in which slavery was destroyed. At the beginning of the Union, there was a strong sentiment in the Southern States, especially in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, against the existence of slavery, but the action of three of the New England States in joining with the two extreme Southern States to keep open the slave trade for twenty years through an article in the constitution, and the subsequent activity of New England shipping in bringing thousands of negroes into the South, made its abolition a great difficulty. The development of the cotton industry and the subsequent tremendous propaganda launched against slavery caused the views of many in the South to change, and they came to regard it as a beneficent institution, but this was largely a defensive attitude. It is a fact that the South at no period in its history made any guarantee to the North as to the time of its abolition and the moral question or the present unwillingness of the South to re-establish the institution, is a totally different one from the historical or material question. In view of the fact that the example of Germany shows that the highest military and industrial developments are not incompatible with a very limited freedom in the citizen, no one can be certain that slavery of the African race in the South would not be a more productive con-



dition than their freedom, especially as long as they remain congested as they are in the South and race distinction and subordination are thereby perpetuated.

And here we may ask the question, was the decline of the South attributable to slavery? Before the Revolution Virginia and the South up to about 1720 had much less population and wealth than the North, but from that time to the Revolution with the great influx of slaves, the South forged ahead and acquired all its opulence and importance. Then came a relative decline, and finally by war a change to the abolition of slavery. Has the South improved by the change? Since the war for Southern independence fifty-two years have elapsed, but the South relative to the North is far behind what it was in 1861. The single State of Massachusetts, which in 1860 was about equal in wealth to Virginia, has now more wealth than all the eleven States that went into secession, if we leave out the State of Texas. And how about the fabulous wealth of New York and Pennsylvania? To one step taken by the South since the war the North has taken twenty. Make all the allowance for the impoverishment by the war one chooses, and there is no real reason to suppose that the case will be different fifty years hence.

The primal cause of the decline of the South after the Revolution was not slavery, but the presence of the negro under the new conditions created by Union. The secondary causes principally dependent upon the primal, were the oppressive sectional legislation by the National Congress, agricultural pursuits as contrasted with manufactures, and failure to receive any share of the vast emigration from Europe. These factors are as much in existence now as before 1861. The South will never acquire real prosperity till it gets rid of the negro, who is as disturbing a factor now as he ever was. He is unassimilable and marks the South off as a distinct people. He frightens off emigration. He discourages manufactures. He renders many laws which are suited to the generality of the Union wholly unsuited to the South. The thing to do is not to restore slavery, but to scatter the negroes throughout the Union so that their influence will not be felt particularly in any one section. This should be done by intelligent

statesmanship — not suddenly or violently, but gradually, and the vacancy in labor filled by the introduction of white immigrants.

A word or two may be said as to the ethics of secession and its possible success and actual defeat. As an original question union is always better than division. If the united empire of all the English-speaking people had not been broken in 1776, perhaps through this overwhelming power, universal peace would now be a fact instead of universal war. Had the American colonies failed in their contest with Great Britain, as at times it appeared they would do, even with the powerful assistance of France, all hope would not have been extinguished. There is no reason to suppose that any English colony would ever have experienced the condition of a Spanish satrapy. Probably after a few years, under a change of party, and the growing sense of liberty in England, the rebellion itself would have fallen into disrepute in America. But even union, great as the idea is, is not the only thing to be considered. Certainly, if, in 1776, the unjust and unconstitutional taxes imposed by the British government created an incompatibility which justified the rupture of the British Union, there was just as much reason for the rupture of the Federal Union, when the two sections had an "irrepressible" issue between them.

Some things are assured. Had the South succeeded, it would have had its own laws suited to its own conditions, and it would have developed along its own lines. As it is, it has been forced to conform itself to the conditions of the Northern section and to be merely tributary to the interests of that section. Brought in direct relation with the rest of the world slavery, if it had survived the war, would have felt the general condemnation more acutely, and there is no reason to suppose that the evil would have been perpetuated. As to its relations with the Northern Confederacy, it is reasonable to assume that the South's peace conditions would not have been more disturbed than have been the peace conditions of the United States with Canada, which extends along the whole of our Northern border. Fear of the Northern power would have proved the bond of the Southern States. Above all, success would have saved the South from the extensive demoralization.

zation incident to all conquests. No one supposes that the new South compares with the old South in moral force and vigor: and while in the North since the war there has been a marked rise in the character of its public men, in the South, on the other hand, there has been a marked decline. Many Southerners by the allurements of the Federal offices, Northern capital and personal preferments sold their birthrights for a mess of pottage and deserted the old Southern ideals.

The South after the war had the choice of remaining hostile and sullen and of proving like Ireland a thorn in the side of the government, but eminently practical it resolved to accept the result in a loyal and genuine spirit. Aided by that vast body of Northern citizens constituting the Democratic Party, who condemned autocracy, and who in the fashion of the times have been stigmatized as "copperheads," they managed to rehabilitate themselves as partners in the restored America, from which they are not to be shaken even by any ill-founded and unjust attacks on their history after the spirit of the *Times* article. Not only did self-interest point the way, but there was a recollection which proved immensely important that if the North had preserved the Union — the Union itself had been chiefly built up by the wisdom of Southern statesmen.

But to come back to the *Times* article and its Hohenzollern analogy, which section represented German spirit more nearly — the North or the South? As a matter of fact, the North went to school to the South in democracy. In the beginning of the Union the North was the headquarters of the Federalist party — the party of aristocratic ideas, and the South was the headquarters of the Republican Party — the party of democratic ideas. The leaders of the first were Hamilton, of New York, and John Adams, of Massachusetts, who had no confidence in the fitness of the people to rule. The leaders of the second were Jefferson and Madison, who taught the true doctrines of popular rights. Personal independence among the whites was far greater in the South than in the North, for in the latter section the menial duties were discharged by white servants, and there were no white servants in the South. It was a condition peculiar to the South that the



poorer the white man the more jealous he was of his rights and his liberties. Any authority the rich slave owner possessed over his poorer white neighbors was due to their own free volition, and was a mere concession to superior education and refinement. Henry Adams, in his History of the United States, gives a description of the poorer classes in Virginia, which was true in the early days and continues true to this day: "No where in America existed better human material than in the middle and lower classes of Virginia. As explorers, adventurers, fighters, wherever courage, activity and force were wanted, *they had no equals*, but they had never known discipline and *were beyond measure jealous of restraint.*"

On the other hand, the difference between the rich and the poor was always great in the North, and this difference has continued to grow deeper and wider, till in this day a perfect chasm exists between the multi-millionaire and the poor man of the slums. The greatest master of slaves in the old South was nothing in social and political power compared with the present masters of Wall Street.

It is sometimes stated that the majority of the Southern whites, despite personal independence, had little or no influence in political affairs, but this, if true, and it is not, is offset by the equal or greater number of poor persons in the North, who were similarly without weight in political affairs. These included the vast population of the slums of the cities and the millions of emigrants who were mere tools of the manufacturers, men who spoke English with difficulty and were brought up under servile conditions in the lands of their birth. This condition gave rise in the early days to the Albany regency in New York and the city boss of the Tweed type in more recent times, factors in Northern life whose spirit was thoroughly autocratic.

The fact is there was never anything in common between the system of Germany and the system of the South. The German system represented always civil efficiency, great military establishments, and strict subordination of the citizen to the government. The South had little civic organization, was principled against military armaments, and the governmental power in



every Southern State was circumscribed within the narrowest limits. There was no likeness whatever between Calhoun and Davis, and Bismarck and Von Moltke. The two first were typical Southern gentlemen, plain in their dress and manners and deferential even to negroes, and the other two were haughty representatives of caste who despised the peasant of their own race and color as a common worm.

No country ever waged a war on principles more different from Germany than did the Southern States. Germany justifies its campaigns of "frightfulness" on the plea of necessity, but in any result its national entity is secure. The South, on the other hand, knew that failure in arms would mean the extinction of its national being, but there were some things it could not do even to preserve this, and so Robert E. Lee commanded her armies on land and Raphael Semmes roved the sea, but no drop of innocent blood stained the splendor of their achievements.

While I am glad to say that the North did not go to the same extent as Germany, the general policy of its warfare was the same, one of destruction and spoliation, and the campaigns of Sheridan and Sherman will always stand in history in the catalogue of the cruel and the inhumane. The expulsion of all the inhabitants from Atlanta and the burning of the city was the prototype of the martyrdom of Louvain. Rheims and its ancient Cathedral have suffered less from the shells of the Germans than beautiful Columbia and Savannah suffered from the torch and wanton depredation of the Federal soldiers.

So much for the *Times* article, and just a few words in reply to an article of similar though much milder character which appeared in the February number of the *World's Work*, entitled "America in the Battle Line of Democracy." In contrast with the *Times*, the author of this article, with commendable fairness, admits that the old South had no Kultur like Germany's "designed to drive democracy off the earth" and "no dreams of a slave super state," imposing its iron will upon the peoples of other nations, but the analogy between a victorious South and a victorious Germany is given in this sentence: "Nevertheless, despite its lesser menace, if the Confederacy had won, the greatest experiment in democracy would have been broken in two."

In this sentence there is a lack of clearness, if not of logic. If "the greatest experiment in democracy" is intended to mean the United States geographically speaking, "the breaking in two" would have been necessarily true. But if the words are to be understood as meaning the principle of popular rule then the statement is absurd, for an abstract idea cannot be "broken in two." It is to be assumed, therefore, that the rupture of the Union is what the writer intends, but how does this afford any analogy to a victorious German autocracy? So far as democracy is concerned the situation would not have been changed from what it was in 1860. There would have been the same States with and without slavery, and the only difference would have been two governments instead of one. Nor would the division of the Union resemble anything like the spirit of Germany whose aim is not to divide but to heap up territories and extend its conquering power over the world.

In the same article the writer in pointing the moral to his story quotes Lincoln's Gettysburg address and states that these last words of his speech — "That the nation shall under God have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth," described the great cause for which Lincoln sent armies into the field. Here is the same lack of logic and historic accuracy. The North had been antagonistic to the South from the first days of union, but it was really the jealousy of a rival nation. The chief elements that first entered into the situation were antagonistic interests and different occupations. Manufactures were arrayed against agriculture, a protective tariff against tariff for revenue. Long before the quickening of the Northern conscience, and while the slave trade was being actively prosecuted by men from New England, that section was particularly violent against the South. Its dislike of the great democrat Jefferson went beyond all words, and he was described by the Chief Justice of Massachusetts as "an apostle of atheism and anarchy, bloodshed and plunder."<sup>1</sup> How much of real opposition to slavery was mixed with this old-time jealousy in the Republican plank against slavery in the terri-

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<sup>1</sup> Wharton's *State Trials*.

tories in 1860 no one can exactly say. But with the exception of the abolitionists, all persons — Democrats and Republicans alike — were unanimous in saying that there was no intention of interfering with slavery in the States. Lincoln was emphatically of this view, and so declared in his inaugural address.

In instituting hostilities soon after, had he avowed that he wished to raise armies to fight the South for a "new birth of freedom" and to keep popular government "from perishing from the earth," he would have been laughed at. Had he avowed his purpose of raising armies for the abolition of slavery, none but the abolitionists would have joined him. He obtained his armies only by repeatedly declaring that he waged war merely for preserving the Union. As a matter of fact, the abolitionists, the only true friends of immediate emancipation, became so disgusted with his opinions as to the objects of the war that nine months after the emancipation proclamation they proposed a deal with the Confederacy on the subject of abolishing slavery.<sup>1</sup> Later in the latter part of 1864 Mr. Davis sent Duncan U. Kenner abroad to guarantee to the governments of Great Britain and France the abolition of slavery in return for recognition.<sup>2</sup> He came too late, but suppose independence and emancipation had resulted from either of these two movements, with what grace could the South claim that they had fought the war for abolition? No more really has the North any real right to claim that they sent armies into the field for freedom because abolition resulted at the end. In his Gettysburg speech Lincoln talked about popular rule, but this was a kind of oratory in which South and North had both indulged for one hundred years,<sup>3</sup> and we are told that the speech made no particular impression at the time. It was not till long afterwards

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<sup>1</sup> See correspondence between Moncure D. Conway, agent in London, for the abolitionists, and James M. Mason, the Confederate Commissioner (WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE QUARTERLY, XXI, 221-224).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* XXV, 9-12 — "Kenner's Mission to Europe."

<sup>3</sup> In his work "Some Information Respecting America," published in 1794, Thomas Cooper, the celebrated philosopher, writes on page 53, referring to the United States: "The government is the government of the people and *for* the people" (Italics as in the book).



that its literary merits were recognized, and from praise for its sentiments the Northerners have passed to regarding it as presenting an historical concept of the war. It seems they have ended in actually assuming to themselves the monopoly of all democratic principles on this continent.

The same indifference to the real facts characterizes an article in the *Literary Digest* for April 21, entitled the "Moral Climax of the war." It states that the Russian Revolution and the entrance of the United States into the war have brought about a thrilling change in the moral aspects of the war, "resembling the new impulse that fired the North when the emancipation proclamation was issued." Did any "new impulse" fire the North as a result of the emancipation proclamation? On the contrary, Lincoln in his "strictly private" letter<sup>1</sup> to Hamlin the vice-president, manifested his keen disappointment: "While I hope something from the proclamation," he wrote, "my expectations are not so sanguine as are those of some friends. The time for its effect southward has not come, but northward the effect should be instantaneous. It is six days old and while commendations in newspapers and by distinguished individuals are all that a vain man could wish, the stocks have declined and troops have come forward more slowly than ever. This looked soberly in the face is not very satisfactory." The Democrats made extensive gains in the House of Representatives, and the elections came near being what the steadfast Republican journal, the *New York Times*, declared them to be a vote of want of confidence in the President. James Ford Rhodes, the historian, commenting<sup>2</sup> upon this disappointing result, writes as follows: "No one can doubt that it (the proclamation of emancipation) was a contributory force operating with these other influences: the corruption in the War Department before Stanton became Secretary, the suppression of freedom of speech and freedom of the press, arbitrary arrests which had continued to be made by military orders under the authority of the Secretary of

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<sup>1</sup> Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, Nicholay and Hay, Vol. VIII, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Rhodes, James Ford IV, p. 164.



War, and the suspension by the same power, of the writ of habeas corpus. But the dominant cause was the failure of our armies to accomplish decisive results in the field." It was the subsequent employment of negro troops against their masters<sup>1</sup> and the starvation of the South by the blockade enabling the North to obtain the desired victories that brought about the collapse of the Confederacy — not the emancipation proclamation. In the face of this plain statement of the facts it is difficult to understand where the analogy suggested by the writer in the *Literary Digest* exists. The "thrills" were conspicuously absent in the matter of the emancipation proclamation when issued.

To my mind the present righteous war with Germany represents far more closely the old South in 1861, than the old North of that time. Indeed, no two men ever stood farther apart in principle than Wilson and Lincoln. What does the war stand for as currently stated in the United States?

(1) The war stands for the rights of the "small nations," and it insists that Belgium, Serbia and Roumania have as much right to exist as Germany. The South in 1861 made a similar claim. The Union really consisted of two distinct nations differing in institutions, occupations and ideals. No stronger witnesses of this fact are to be found than Lincoln and Seward — both of whom spoke of the Union as containing the elements of an "irrepressible conflict" and declared that it could not endure "half slave and half free." Of the two nations the South was much the weaker, but it had a population greater than Belgium or Serbia, or Bulgaria or Roumania, and a territory more extensive than Germany and Austria combined. By fighting a four years war on equal terms with the powerful North it gave the best proof of its right to exist in the sun as an independent nation. After drawing in vain on his own population and that of Europe to suppress the South, Lincoln resorted to forcible enlistments from the South's own population to achieve his victory, confessing that

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<sup>1</sup> Arming the slaves by the British was particularly denounced by the Americans in the Revolution as barbarous and savage.

without the negro troops the North "would be compelled to abandon the war in three weeks<sup>1</sup>."

(2) The war stands for "government based on the consent of the governed." This doctrine was announced by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and France appeals to it in behalf of Alsace and Lorraine, Italy in behalf of Trieste and the Trentino, Roumania in behalf of Transylvania, while Poland and Bohemia demand its recognition in behalf of themselves. The sacred character of the principle is affirmed by Wilson in his inaugural address March 4, 1917, and in his letter to the new Russian government,<sup>2</sup> but Lincoln and the North in 1861 denied its application to the South.

(3) The war stands for "humanity," as recognized by the International Law. It is a solemn protest against the frightfulness of unrestricted submarine warfare, the barbarous destruction of the property of non-combatants, the deportation of the innocent inhabitants of conquered regions, &c. How stands history in regard to the North and South? Here is the testimony of the late Charles Francis Adams — a Federal Brigadier General, and President of the Massachusetts Historical Society: "Our own methods during the last stages of the war were sufficiently described by General Sheridan, when during the Franco-Prussian war, as the guest of Bismarck, he declared against humanity in warfare, contending that the correct policy was to treat a hostile population with the utmost rigor, leaving them, as he expressed it, Nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war." The doctrine that there must be no humanity in warfare proclaimed by Sheridan

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<sup>1</sup> Lincoln's words were: "Abandon all the posts now garrisoned by black men, take 150,000 men from our side and put them in the battlefield or cornfield against us, and we would be compelled to abandon the war in three weeks." (*Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, X, 190). That the enlistment of the negroes was largely forced see Minor, *The Real Lincoln*, p. 181-184.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter to the Russian government setting forth the war aims of this government, Wilson writes as follows: "No people must be forced under sovereignty under which it does not wish to live."

was also voiced by Sherman in his letter to General Grant March 9, 1864: "Until we can repopulate Georgia it is useless for us to occupy it, but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people will cripple their military resources \* \* \* I can make the march and make Georgia howl." General Halleck wanted the site of Charleston, thick with the heroic memories of the Revolution, sowed with salt, and General Grant, in his order to General David Hunter, thought it prudent to notify the crows to carry their provisions with them in future flights across the Valley. Nothing need be said of the ferocious spirit of the lesser tribe of Federal commanders. And Lincoln, in spite of the fine catchy sentiments of his Gettysburg speech, gave his sanction to the same policy when he said<sup>1</sup> in response to a protest against his employment of negro troops: "No human power can subdue this rebellion without the use of the emancipation policy and every other policy calculated to weaken the moral and physical forces of the rebellion." Secretary Chase in his diary shows that on July 21, 1862, in a Cabinet meeting, the President expressed himself as "averse to arming the negroes," but shortly after, on August 3, 1862, the President said on the same question that "he was pretty well cured to any objections to any measure except want of adaptedness to putting down the Rebellion." To the spoliators Hunter, Sheridan and Sherman, he wrote his enthusiastic commendations and not a word of censure. Were Lincoln and his supporters humane? By an Act of Congress approved July 17, 1862, and published with an approving proclamation by Lincoln, death, imprisonment or confiscation of property were denounced on five million white people in the South and all their abettors and aiders in the North. To reduce the South to submission Lincoln instituted on his own motion a blockade, a means of war so extreme that despite its legality under the International Law, it has evoked from the Germans the most savage retaliation when applied to them. He threatened with hanging as pirates Southern privateersmen and as guerillas regularly commissioned partisans. He suspended the cartel of exchange, and when the

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<sup>1</sup> Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, Vol. X, p. 191.



Federal prisoners necessarily fared badly for lack of food on account of the blockade and the universal devastation, he retorted their sufferings upon the Confederate prisoners — thousands of whom perished of cold and starvation in the midst of plenty. Medicines were made contraband, and to justify the seizure of neutral goods at sea great enlargement of the principle of the "ultimate destination" was introduced into the International Law. The property of non-combatants was seized everywhere without compensation, and within the areas embraced by the Union lines, the oath of allegiance was required of both sexes above sixteen years of age under penalty of being driven from their homes. Houses, barns, villages and towns were destroyed, and the fiercest retaliation was employed by the Federal commanders to strike terror into Southerners. Even the act for which Lincoln has been most applauded in recent days — his emancipation proclamation stood on no real humanitarian ground.

Lincoln vacillated very much before deciding to put it out. At a meeting of the Cabinet, July 22, 1862, he announced tentatively his purpose of publishing such a paper, but on September 13, only ten days before his issuance of it, he absolutely ridiculed the thing, though not altogether committing himself against the step, pronouncing it as futile as "the Pope's bull against the Comet." He asked: "Would my word free the slaves when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the Rebel States? Is there a single court or magistrate or individual that would be influenced by it there?" The doubtful success of the battle of Antietam raised his spirits and decided him the other way; the emancipation proclamation was issued, but instead of taking the high ground of general liberty, he applied it to only that portion of the South over which he had confessed himself powerless, exempting from its application that part where he had real authority by means of Federal occupation.

Issued in this form it could not have contemplated to any appreciable extent a moral effect in making friends for the government. What then? The Confederates denounced it as an effort to incite the negroes to rise and murder the women and children in the South living lonely and unprotected while their men folks were at war.



In this light it was denounced severely in England and France. When the negroes did not rise, Lincoln denied that such was his purpose, but against this are his own words. After urging, as stated, the futility of the emancipation proclamation he used this language:<sup>1</sup> "Understand I raise no objections against it on legal or constitutional grounds, for as chief of the Army and Navy in time of war, I suppose I may take any measure which may best subdue the enemy. Nor do I urge objections of a moral nature in view of possible consequences of insurrection and massacre in the Southern States. I view this measure as a practical war measure, according to the advantages or disadvantages it may offer to the suppression of the Rebellion." Here there are a distinct recognition that insurrection and massacre were a possible consequence and a distinct affirmation that objections of every nature, legal, constitutional or moral had no weight as against the advantages or disadvantages of the measure as a practical war measure. This much, at least, may be said that if there was any measure calculated to incite the negroes, this was the one, and that if the dreadful consequences did not ensue it can never be credited to the humanity of Lincoln who realized the peril. All the credit goes to the humanity with which the slave owners treated their slaves.

As Lincoln said: "He wanted to beat the rebels," and to win he resorted to the most extreme measures. When he thought that milder action might have a chance of prevailing, he tried that too, but seemingly without any particular preference. He never understood the Southern people, and to him the whole question of secession seemed to be the money value of slaves instead of one of violated rights or self-government, as it undoubtedly was. He is, therefore, much lauded for his humanity by those who take the same view of Southern men's motives as his own for suggesting on February 6, 1865, to his cabinet to pay the Southern people \$400,000,000, if they would quit fighting — the money "to be for the extinguishment of slavery or for such purpose as the States

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<sup>1</sup> Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, VIII, 30, 31.

were disposed.”<sup>1</sup> But his cabinet was opposed to the proposition and Lincoln did not insist on it. It never got anywhere; but to show the light in which Lincoln regarded his offer it is interesting to notice that he justified it to his cabinet, not on any generous or noble grounds, but on the mercenary one that the sum “would pay the expenses of the war 200 days.” The proposition really contained a gross insult to the Southerners. Their men were not fighting for the money value of slaves, but for a national existence which they deemed menaced in the old Union. There was no other meaning to their taking up arms, and there was no solution to the war except independence or absolute defeat. Their principles were not for sale. Suppose Washington during the American Revolution had received from the British Government a pecuniary offer to quit fighting, what would have been his reply?

Contrast with all this the record of President Davis and his generals on land and admirals at sea. The campaign of Lee in Pennsylvania and the victorious career of Raphael Semmes on the ocean were a contrast in every respect to the actions of the Federal commanders (George B. McClellan always excepted), and were about as far removed from the “frightfulness” of the Germans as anything could be. And President Davis, although greatly blamed for his humanity from some quarters<sup>2</sup> in the South, avoided in every way possible the practice of the doctrine of retaliation, which made the innocent responsible for the guilty. The only regrettable instance of severity by the Confederates was the burning of Chambersburg by General McCausland in retaliation for General Hunter’s campaign of fire and sword in the Valley of Virginia. It was not a part of any settled plan of destruction and occurred only after a demand for a moderate indemnity had been made of the inhabitants — an indemnity whose amount would make the Germans smile — and been refused by them.

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<sup>1</sup> Diary of Gideon Welles, II, 237.

<sup>2</sup> See criticisms of Edmund Ruffin in *WILLIAM AND MARY QUARTERLY*, XXI, 224-228.

(4) Finally, the war stands for democracy against autocracy. As already stated the South was the champion of democratic principles when the North was wedded to those of an aristocratic character. The South had its Jefferson and Madison and the North had its Hamilton and John Adams. The difference between the rich and the poor was always greater in the North than in the South, so far as the whites were concerned.<sup>1</sup> Lincoln adopted absolute autocratic principles during the war, making *necessity*<sup>2</sup> his plea just as Germany has done. Despite the rulings of his own chief justice and the plain language of the constitution he assumed the power of suspending the writ of habeas corpus, and under the pretense of the so-called war powers set aside any clause of the constitution interfering with his will. He arrested 38,000 people in the North at different times and confined them in prison, subjected to great hardships, without any formal charge or trial, and in reply to a protest from a mass meeting at Albany, New York, used this extraordinary language: "The suspension of the habeas corpus was for the purpose that men may be arrested and held in prison who cannot be proved guilty of any defined crime." After the war the South was held by the North under military government for twelve years, and the most ignorant elements of the population were entrusted with the power under the reconstruction policy. If this does not signify autocratic rule similar to that which Germany would impose upon the world, what does?

How utterly unlike Lincoln has been the conduct of President Wilson, who has scrupulously consulted Congress on every important question concerning the war with Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> For more than one hundred years there were practically no white servants in the South, and even now it is embarrassing to a Southern man to order white people around as they do in the North.

<sup>2</sup> In his message to the extra session of Congress, July 4, 1861, Lincoln after rather tamely attempting to defend his unconstitutional action, falls back upon "necessity" for justification as follows: "These measures, whether strictly legal or not, were ventured upon under what appeared to be a popular demand and a public necessity: trusting then as now that Congress would readily ratify them."



In conclusion, it is proper to state that it affords the writer no pleasure to indulge in recrimination, but as long as Northern writers will insist on misstating facts and rubbing the old sores the wrong way, they need not expect absolute silence from the South. The North is to be congratulated upon its conversion to the principles for which the South contended, both in the Revolution and the war between the States. The war with Germany should be pushed to a successful conclusion that the rights of small nations, the right of local self-government, the right of humanity, and the right of democracy be "rendered safe for mankind."









